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Take a Loving Look

How we see our partners often depends more on how we are than they are. Husbands and wives are not audience, but participant observers in each other's life.

"Before we were married, my husband was a caring, energetic man," a wife once told me. "He couldn't seem to keep his hands off me. Since we've been married, he's become a couch potato and watches ball games more than he watches me. He's gone from stud to spud."

"Very funny," answered the husband. "But have you looked at yourself lately? When we got married, you were beautiful. Now you wear that old robe. If I've gone from stud to spud, then you've gone from doll to drudge."

This hurtful, infantile argument illustrates how spouses, instead of looking for love, may look for flaws. It is a way of seeing.

Author Judith Viorst once wrote, "Infatuation is when you think he's as gorgeous as Robert Redford, as pure as Solzhenitsyn, as funny as Woody Allen, as athletic as Jimmy Connors, and as smart as Albert Einstein. Love is when you realize he's as gorgeous as Woody Allen, as smart as Jimmy Connors, as funny as Solzhenitsyn, as athletic as Albert Einstein, and nothing like Robert Redford in any category--but you'll take him anyway."

This law of lasting love instructs us to look with instead of for love.